

Director's Report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission  
presented by Jeffrey Koenings, Ph.D., WDFW Director  
January 13, 2006

#### A Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife

We serve Washington's citizens by protecting, restoring, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats, while providing sustainable fish and wildlife-related recreational and commercial opportunities.

#### GOAL I: HEALTHY AND DIVERSE FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND HABITATS DEVELOP, INTEGRATE AND DISSEMINATE SOUND FISH, WILDLIFE AND HABITAT SCIENCE.

Fish Passage Center: WDFW has been very involved in maintaining the functionality of the Fish Passage Center since Senator Craig first proposed to eliminate it. The Fish Passage Center is an independent body of scientists and analysts, charged with providing the state and tribal fisheries managers with data and analyses of juvenile and adult salmonid passage and survival through the Columbia River hydro system. It has been funded by BPA for almost two decades, and the web site it maintains with fish counts, river conditions and the like has become heavily used by the region. Following Congressional approval of Senator Craig's rider language, BPA solicited proposals for other entities to assume the Fish Passage Center functions, since Congress expressed an intent of maintaining the functions. WDFW worked with other states and tribes to prepare a collaborative proposal in a short time frame. Since those attempts were not successful, WDFW developed its own proposal and submitted it for short-term (April 2006 to June 2007) funding. The proposal maintains the current functions and provides for a strong advisory role from other state agencies and tribal managers. It also begins to build a peer review function, and employs an outside group such as a University policy resolution group to begin to build a new regional governance structure for this regional function. WDFW staff are currently preparing a proposal for longer-term funding of the Fish Passage Center (2007-2009). This proposal builds on the changes that would begin in the near term, and continues to integrate the Fish Passage Center functions into regional monitoring and evaluation efforts.

Beckman Coulter GenomeLab SNPstream Genotyping System: The WDFW Molecular Genetics lab is in the process of purchasing a Beckman Coulter GenomeLab SNPstream Genotyping System. This is a brand new technology and we are the very first lab that's doing salmonid work to get one of these. We will be working closely with Beckman technical people to get its operation optimized. Our goal in acquiring this equipment is to be able to rapidly assay samples for SNPs, a different, simpler kind of DNA variation than micro satellites. At the moment SNPs seem to be the wave of the future in genetic analysis of fisheries and they hold great promise for other applications, perhaps in time even getting into the molecular basis of differences in quantitative traits such as body size, run timing, disease resistance, etc.

COMPASS Workshop: Dan Ayres was asked to attend a workshop in Monterey, California during the first couple of days the week of December 11, 2005. Sponsored by COMPASS (Communication Partnership for Science and the Sea, a non-governmental group), the title of the workshop was Implementing

Marine Ecosystem Based Management: Integrating Perspectives from Science and Management. An excellent line-up of speakers discussed the pros and cons of trying to implement ecosystem based management on a large scale in the marine waters of the United States. In breakout sessions Dan was able to provide some perspective from the view of an "on-the-ground" fisheries manager, tempering the excitement of some of the other participants who had less experience with the challenges faced by resource managers in today's real world.

Public Outreach and Education / Job Shadow: Tasha Geiger, Area Fish Biologist for the Nooksack and Samish Basins and their associated independent tributaries, was accompanied by a Ferndale high school student through the high schools "job shadow program". The female student joined Tasha for a day of spawner surveys. Having the opportunity to actively witness coho salmon spawning in their natal streams will hopefully have planted a seed into the heart and mind of the student and encourage her to become a biologist; regardless the day was a success.

Washington Sea Otter Population Surveys: Results from the annual sea otter surveys yielded the highest ever counts of sea otters in Washington (814 otters). Surveys as recent as 1990 resulted in counts of approximately 200 animals. Otters ranged from roughly Kalaloch/Destruction Island to Tatoosh Island/Cape Flattery. The results from this and past surveys are available in the recently completed report authored by Ron Jameson and Steve Jeffries. The report is available on the WDFW Science Magazine publications webpage.

Genetics of Integrated Hatchery Programs: In response to numerous questions about integrated hatchery programs, which have become a cornerstone of WDFW's hatchery reform efforts, Craig Busack has developed a presentation on "Genetics of Integrated Hatchery Programs". He has presented the talk twice in Olympia on November 9 and again on November 28, to a total of just over 100 WDFW staff. The presentation has been well received and many good questions from the audience have allowed the talk to be made more relevant each time. Andy Appleby was present at both presentations to answer more detailed questions about implementation. This has proven so valuable that Andy accompanied Craig on the eastside presentation December 15, 2005 in Moxee.

Data Collection for the EDT Sensitivity Analysis: Brad Thompson is in the final stages of data collection for the EDT sensitivity analysis he began several months ago. The analysis is aimed entirely at determining how EDT results can vary depending on data quality in Puget Sound chinook populations. For this analysis a detailed survey was sent to EDT users, asking their opinions about how widely the true value of a parameter may vary depending on the level of proof. These survey results were then used to generate probability distributions of parameter values. Data collection then consisted of doing several hundred Monte Carlo samplings of data from each basin, running EDT, and then generating distributions of values for productivity and capacity.

Marine Resources for Future Generations (MRFFG) Program Showcased in Federal Publication: The November 2005 issue of "Environmental Health Perspectives" published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, includes an article

entitled, "Framing Scientific Analyses for Risk Management of Environmental Hazards by Communities: Case Studies with Seafood Safety Issues." The three case studies included originated in Washington: 1) The MRFFG Program; 2) The Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe; and 3) The Swinomish Indian Tribal Community.

**Yakima Elk Herd Study:** During a recent seven-day capture operation (Dec 15-21), a WDFW lead crew captured and handled 78 elk in support of the Game Division's Yakima Elk Herd Study. The effort was led by Deer and Elk Specialist Dr. Scott McCorquodale and involved staff from Region 3 Wildlife Areas (Cindi Confer, Jody Taylor, Wayne Hunt, John McGowan, and Bruce Berry), regional biological staff (Jeff Bernatowicz and Will Moore), enforcement officers Alan Baird and Shawn Myers, USFS biologists and technicians, wildlife veterinarians Dr. Kristin Mansfield and Dr. Briggs Hall, elk researcher Rachel Cook, and a few volunteers. The 78 elk captured were all adult cows. Many of the captures were recaptures of previously collared elk being sampled for key biological information supporting the Yakima study. Twenty-five of the elk were darted from a helicopter in free-wintering settings, and 53 were ground darted on 8 WDFW elk feeding stations in the Yakima and Ellensburg areas. There were no mortalities or injuries among the captured elk, and none of the personnel involved were injured. This was an extremely productive, safe, and efficient operation.

**Publications:** Steve Jeffries and others have recently published a manuscript in *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry* on the contaminant levels in harbor seals in Puget Sound. Based on their finding, the estimated daily intake of SPCB toxic equivalents to dioxin by Puget Sound harbor seals exceeds some wildlife consumption guidelines for PCBs. Our results indicate that both legacy and new POPs present a health risk to these marine mammals. The article is available on WDFW Science Magazine publication website. The full citation is: Cullon, D.L., Jeffries, S.J., and Ross, P.S. 2005. PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS IN THE DIET OF HARBOR SEALS (*PHOCA VITULINA*) INHABITING PUGET SOUND, WASHINGTON (USA), AND THE STRAIT OF GEORGIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA (CANADA): A FOOD BASKET APPROACH. *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry*, Vol. 24, No. 10, pp. 2562-2572.

**PHS Landscape Guidance Document:** Staff completed a series of science team and advisor meetings with a culminating workshop. Approximately 40 participants from local governments, state agencies, Tribes, and non-governmental groups met to review and comment on preliminary results. The workshop was very well received, and it will contribute to the completion in 2006 of our guidance document addressing fish and wildlife resources in local land use planning.

**Overstocked Stands Template:** Staff presented the forest practice's Over Stocked Stands Template at the Region 6 quarterly meeting. The template was developed specifically for small forest landowners when designing alternate plans to harvest overstocked stands within the riparian management zone. The objective of the template is to provide landowner flexibility, promote tree growth, and decrease tree mortality while promoting forest health and productivity.

**Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Fish Passage Inventory:** The TAPPS divisions fish passage inventory unit has recently completed the inventory and assessment of all fish passage

features located under WSDOT owned roadways in WRIAs 1-23. This completes the WSDOT inventory in the culvert court case area. Inventory staff is now conducting physical habitat surveys for high-ranking potential projects identified in the inventory. This will allow WDFW to provide WSDOT with a list of fully scoped projects for inclusion in their Six-Year Correction Plan. TAPPS staff is also conducting project evaluations to verify successful escapement of adult spawners above recently completed WSDOT fish passage projects.

Washington State Transportation (WSDOT) Barrier Correction through Safety and Mobility Projects: Crews have wrapped up the bi-annual safety and mobility inventory project. Every other year the TAPPS inventory section receives a list of proposed road projects from each of the WSDOT regions. Inventory crews are then dispatched to each region to conduct the road inventory to identify any possible fish passage issues that might fall within the proposed projects. Crossings that are identified as fish passage problems can then be addressed during the upcoming road project. This year crews inventoried 312 miles of highways within proposed safety and mobility projects, and they identified and assessed over 1,500 road crossings.

Yelloweye Rockfish Stock Assessment: In response to a request from the Pacific Fishery Management Council, IRM staff met with Fish Program Marine Fish Science staff in December to discuss whether to re-do the yelloweye rockfish stock assessment. After reviewing available data, Marine Fish Science staff decided to reassess yelloweye rockfish as a full assessment (which allows for the incorporation of new data sources) using a simpler stock synthesis model than was used previously. There was some difficulty in getting the more complex model to converge. This will also provide an opportunity to further discuss area management issues within the assessment. A draft assessment will be prepared by February 2006 that will require scheduling a Stock Assessment and Review (STAR) panel meeting in mid-February in order for the Council to consider approving the revised assessment at its March meeting.

Region 1 PHS Mapping Updates: Staff facilitated the update to the Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille County PHS maps. Terry Johnson (ITS) and Regional Wildlife Program staff contributed valuable expertise in this very successful two-day exercise. Highlights include for the first time in Region 1 the development of a moose layer. These updates are very timely, as the counties in this area will be updating Critical Areas Ordinances over the next few years.

#### PROTECT, RESTORE, AND ENHANCE FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND THEIR HABITATS.

Cowlitz Falls Fish Facility: During 2005, by operating the Cowlitz Falls Fish Facility, Cowlitz Falls staff collected a total of 327,002 smolts from April through August, including 264,921 coho, 46,244 late winter steelhead, 14,811 spring chinook and 1,026 cutthroat smolts.

CWD Activities: We have met our 2005 sampling goal for tissue to test for Chronic Wasting Disease, with a few more samples still to be submitted. Good job Region 1! Tom Owens is currently analyzing data from this year's effort to understand the geographic distribution within Region 1, where we target our collection. This will help in improving our field effort deployment for the 2006 season. We are in

discussions with state/provincial wildlife veterinarians in Oregon and British Columbia about deer farming to better assess areas we might want to add to our target for sampling in 2006.

WSDOT Fishway Inspection: TAPPS staff recently completed the annual inspection, evaluation and compliance review of 81 WSDOT-owned fishways throughout the Western Washington regions. The work was done under contract with WSDOT to ensure that salmon, steelhead, sea-run trout, and native char had access to habitat lying above our major state highway systems. In working with our staff, WSDOT maintained an 80% compliance rate for those fishways inspected. The remaining fishways found out of compliance, 20%, will be integrated into a long-term correction plan.

Loon Lake Dredging: Staff met with citizen proponents of a dredging proposal on Loon Lake in Stevens County. This was an opportunity for the proponents to meet with various agencies to determine the feasibility of this project. The project proposes to dredge a shore of Loon Lake to allow boat access to residences. The material to be dredged is mostly spoils from a sawmill that was located in the area in the early part of the last century. WDFW was able to help the citizens understand what would need to be done to obtain permits to do this work. This is potentially a very contentious situation, as the proponents feel they have not been given timely help on this matter (particularly by the county) and there are many people (as many as 50) wanting to dredge. AHB Palmanteer has been very proactive for the Department in providing technical assistance, but there is little we can do until the requirements of other agencies have been satisfied.

Multi Agency Boat Tour Promotes Collaborative Enforcement Actions: WDFW Habitat Program and Enforcement staff recently provided state, county and federal agencies with a Mid-Columbia River boat tour of several shoreline environmental permitting violations. WDFW works collaboratively with permitting agencies in efforts to fairly implement and enforce local, state, and federal environmental laws to protect critical fish and wildlife habitat. Boat investigation with the other permitting agencies also found large quantities of unauthorized fill placed within the shorelines area and within the Ordinary High Water Line, as well as several un-permitted boat lift/personal watercraft lift and other development structures. WDFW will be working in 2006 with several Central Washington counties as they revise their Critical Area Ordinances and other development regulations necessary to protect our state's fish and wildlife resources.

ENSURE WDFW ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS, FACILITIES, AND LANDS ARE CONSISTENT WITH LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS THAT PROTECT AND RECOVER FISH, WILDLIFE, AND THEIR HABITATS.

Hamma Hamma River: Thom Johnson submitted an application that was approved by NMFS to continue operation of a screw trap on the Hamma Hamma River. The screw trap will help us to estimate freshwater production of naturally-produced salmonids (including ESA-listed summer chum and chinook), estimate survival rates of summer chum and chinook reared in supplementation programs, determine emigration timing of wild and hatchery salmonids, and better assess the productivity and production potential of these ESA-listed stocks. This is a collaborative effort of the tribal co-managers, Long Live the Kings, and the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group.

Cedar River SEIS / AFC Meeting: Steve Foley and Patrick Frazier attended the December meeting of the Cedar River Anadromous Fish Committee. At that meeting Bruce Bachen and Judith Noble with King County DNR informed the AFC that the Seattle Hearing Examiner ruled late Tuesday that the Director's (Seattle Public Utilities) determination of adequacy for the Cedar River Hatchery Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) was shown to be correct and was affirmed. This was a resounding victory and several agencies and individuals were identified as providing support, including the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and WDFW. Specifically Director Koenings and Dave Seiler were praised for their positive testimony. While this is a significant hurdle to clear, opponents could file an appeal in King County Superior Court. There are also several permits required that could be delayed by appeal.

An appeal to this ruling has been subsequently filed in King County Superior court.

Skagit River Mainstem Smolt Traps: On December 13, 2005, Greg Volkhardt, Patrick Frasier and Mike Ackley met with representatives of the City of Mount Vernon and Dike District 17, including Mayor Bud Norris, to discuss permitting and continued utilization of Dike District property for operation of the Skagit River mainstem smolt traps. These traps have been in operation since 1990 and have provided important information for the management and recovery of naturally produced salmon populations in north Puget Sound. All were in agreement that the project should continue operating at this site. A request was made that WDFW, in cooperation with Dike District 17, develop an emergency plan that addresses actions to be taken when floods threaten WDFW equipment, personnel and the dike protecting the City of Mount Vernon. It was also requested that WDFW provide contact lists, meet with neighbors in the vicinity of the trap site, and work through permitting issues with the City and other entities. Outstanding inter-program cooperation between the Region 4 staff (Bob Everett and Pat Frazier) and the Fish Science Division (Greg Volkhardt and Mike Ackley) resulted in a satisfactory outcome for all involved. The Fish Science Division and Region 4 staff, including Lands Agent Kye Iris-Peck, will continue to work closely together to meet these objectives and to develop a close working relationship with all parties.

Disposition of Fall Chinook Eggs from Strays at LFH: All eggs from non Snake River (stray) fall Chinook paired with known Lyons Ferry stock have been picked by Lyons Ferry Hatchery staff. There is on-going discussion within the US v Oregon policy arena as to whether a portion these of known non-Lyons Ferry stock (stray) eggs can be used in the Corps of Engineers juvenile fish transportation study, being developed for implementation at the four lower Snake River dams. A final decision is expected Friday January 6 on this matter. If none of these eggs can be used to rear juvenile fish for the study, and the Nez Perce Tribe cannot utilize them for production needs at their tribal facility on the Clearwater River in Idaho, up to 184,000 eggs may need to be culled. The regional program is in consultation with NOAA Fish and hatchery Division Manager Kerwin as to the potential disposition of these eggs.

Kitsap County Shellfish Pamphlet: Intertidal shellfish managers from the Point Whitney Shellfish Laboratory in Region 6 reviewed and made extensive edits to a new Kitsap County shell fishing pamphlet

slated for publication this spring. The pamphlet, published by the Kitsap County Health Department, shows all public tidelands in Kitsap County and provides advice on the safe harvest of shellfish.

#### INFLUENCE THE DECISIONS OF OTHERS THAT AFFECT FISH, WILDLIFE AND THEIR HABITATS.

**Meetings on Captive Wildlife:** In recent months a couple cases involving deleterious wildlife, Sika deer, which are in captivity and being propagated and another case of elk in captivity on a private Colville exotic game ranch have been brought to our attention. Enforcement actions on both cases will raise the focus on our deleterious and wildlife in captivity statutes. A meeting between Region One Enforcement and Wildlife Program personnel was conducted to discuss strategies to address each situation.

**New Fish-Oriented Water Quality Guidelines Released:** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently released their final draft water temperature guidelines to be incorporated into the new statewide water quality rules expected from Department of Ecology some time in 2006. For the first time, documented native char (bull trout/Dolly Varden), salmon, and steelhead stream use provided specific guidance to the maximum allowable water temperatures.

EPA used U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) "key habitat" reaches for bull trout, along with documented spawning and sensitive juvenile rearing areas for salmon and steelhead to identify stream reaches for which more stringent temperature guidelines are in place during critical times of year. Salmon and steelhead data came from the databases that feed Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW's) SalmonScape Web application, along with additional data provided by USFWS, (Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission) NWIFC and tribal fish biologists, but key to final determinations was expert input provided at a series of review meetings organized by WDFW in September and October. Twenty-six WDFW Fish Program and Habitat Program staff members from all six Regions participated in these meetings, along with U.S. Forest Service (USFS) staff members and 16 tribal staff members (representing NWIFC as well as the Yakama, Colville, Kalispel, Nooksack, Muckleshoot, Makah, Quileute, Hoh, and Quinault tribes). This complex review (including providing updated spawning and rearing data) was given a high priority by these professionals in the midst of the fall field season, which underscores their dedication to doing "whatever it takes" to preserve and protect salmonids in Washington State.

**Access Road in Region 3:** A public fishing access issue at I-82 Ponds 1 and 2 apparently has been resolved. Through Fish Program efforts, it has been determined that there are no impediments to constructing a new access road and parking lot on Sunnyside Wildlife Area (SWA) property that will significantly shorten the walk into these two warmwater ponds that support fishing for largemouth bass, bluegill, yellow perch and walleye. The public has been requesting improvement of WDFW's access route because alternative access on an abandoned railroad right-of-way (r-o-w) was lost. Subsequently, fishing effort at these popular ponds has declined in recent years...particularly by elderly or disabled anglers that could not walk WDFW's existing half-mile long footpath. Prior to now, it was believed that a narrow, private "in-holding" separated and blocked access from the county road right-of-way to the SWA property where the new access road and parking area would be constructed. A thorough

examination using Yakima County's internet-based parcel description resources has proven that there is, in fact, no barrier between the county r-o-w and the SWA. This means Region 3 staff can proceed with the access road upgrade next spring.

Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group Program: Through agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the RFEG Program received \$1,358,503 block grant approved in Federal FY06. WDFW retains up to 2.5% for administrative costs. The remainder is to be divided equally between the 14 RFEGs - \$94,548 per group. The groups access these funds through reimbursement requests. These funds will not be available to the RFEG Program until additional appropriation being sought this legislative session is approved. The contract expires June 30, 2008.

Transportation Permit Efficiency and Accountability Committee (TPEAC):

Watershed Subcommittee - Watershed Characterization: Staff worked on Subcommittee Action Items for institutionalizing watershed mitigation methods after TPEAC by WSDOT, state regulatory agencies, and local government. The Watershed Characterization method developed by Dick Gersib identified over 100 potential wetland mitigation sites for SR 167 (near Renton and Kent) and provided sufficient information on each so that it is possible to develop a short list of 15-20 potential wetland restoration sites to consider for high resource return. The Watershed Pilots (US 12 near Walla Walla and SR 539 near Bellingham) that use existing watershed information (instead of the more comprehensive GIS work of Watershed Characterization) identified fewer sites and in each case the mitigation sites selected in this process did not meet mitigation needs, so this will need additional work and refinement. Watershed Subcommittee - Road Map Action: Staff worked with the Subcommittee to identify Road Map Action items to go in Transportations' End of Year Report. The Subcommittee reached agreement on the report, but WSDOT management had problems with it and would not include it in their end of year report. Unilateral action by WSDOT management created some problems for subcommittee; they will refine the draft and try to submit a Subcommittee Report to TPEAC.

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) Wind Power: There is regional concern that PSE and WDFW Headquarters are not supporting the recommendations developed at the field level by the Wildlife Area Manager and our Rangeland Ecologist on WDFW-owned lands. There is an opinion that we are not constrained to the wind power minimum guidelines for a project on our lands because the guidelines were supposedly developed for private or other public lands. We have plant communities that are high quality, very difficult to restore, and are strategically important for wildlife. We have argued successfully that the Wild Horse Project is special because of the issues relating to sage grouse and their habitat. We have asked for special considerations on lands other than our own for sage grouse habitat, and the landowners have been willing to do this. We believe that WDFW must advocate for good management using the Best Available Science on our own lands. To do otherwise does serious damage to the credibility of the agency, and it undercuts the Lands Division and the Habitat Program in particular.



We've been giving advice to DNR, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and private landowners regarding shrub steppe protection, and we assume the public should expect as much from us.

Trust for Public Land: Region 6 shellfish staff from the Point Whitney Shellfish Laboratory met with project managers from the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and Washington State Parks to discuss the potential and process for acquiring upland access to several state-owned recreational tidelands. TPL's "Greenprint for Puget Sound" is a community-based conservation project that includes strategies for increasing public access to tidelands. WDFW shellfish representatives presented a prioritized list of important state-owned shellfish beaches that currently are boat-access only, and thus underutilized by the sport fishing public. Together with State Parks we identified the top priority as acquiring upland access to Toandos Peninsula State Park, nearly two miles of productive tideland in northern Hood Canal. TPL acts as a facilitator for government agencies in acquiring funding and purchasing land for conservation and public recreation.

Yelm Hydroelectric Project (Centralia Utilities): City of Centralia Utilities received our comments on their "As-built Contingency Measures" for their Wildlife Enhancement Plan. As a result of our collaboration, their contractor will adjust the timing of mowing of reed canary grass and other exotic invasive species to accommodate nesting migratory birds. They also agreed to change the timing of their bird monitoring from late July to somewhere between April and early June to assess the breeding season more efficiently. In addition, they agreed to maintain, clean, and monitor their wood duck boxes and replace boxes that are not easily accessible for maintenance.

Wiley Slough Estuary Restoration Design Project: Director Jeff Koenings approved the Final Wiley Slough Estuary Restoration Design Report. The total cost to implement the Wiley Slough Estuary Restoration Design is \$2,806,500. Area Habitat Biologist Brian Williams, who co-chaired the Wiley Slough Estuary Restoration Design Team, now chairs the Wiley Slough Estuary Restoration Funding Team. On behalf of WDFW, the Funding Team has submitted the funding applications to the Wetland Reserve Program (\$1,424,000) and the Salmon Restoration Funding Board (\$1,382,500).

Henry M. Jackson Hydroelectric Project Relicensing: Snohomish Public Utility District Number 1 (PUD) submitted a Notice of Intent and Pre-Application Document to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to begin relicensing of their project on the Sultan River. The project includes Culmback Dam and 4.4 mile-long Spada Reservoir, a bypass pipeline to the powerhouse, and the City of Everett water diversion dam. The city withdraws about 170 cubic feet per second for domestic water supply. Anticipated issues include improving the trout fishery in Spada Reservoir, providing access for anadromous fishes upstream of the diversion dam, and consideration of project effects on riverine processes such as gravel movement, the formation of log jams, and the creation or maintenance of productive side-channel and off-channel habitat. Consideration may also be given to improving the wildlife habitat on the several thousand acres owned by the PUD.

Watershed Characterization Task Force: Staff worked to help develop an interagency staff Watershed Characterization Task Force. The task force will examine ways to develop a watershed characterization

that combines Ecology's Landscape Planning document with WSDOT's Watershed-based Mitigation Characterization tool with ecoregional biodiversity information. It would also identify a potential county pilot and funding for this watershed characterization. If this can be accomplished, it could be a very significant tool for use in growth management and land use planning and in identification and prioritization of restoration areas and mitigation sites.

Intermountain Province Oversight Committee: Staff represented the Department on the Intermountain Province Oversight Committee (IMPOC) at several meetings in Idaho and Washington. The IMPOC is the organization that developed to subbasin plans for BPA in the Intermountain Province. The Committee will now begin implementing these plans for the 2007 - 2009 BPA finding cycle. The Department has a voting seat on this important committee that includes representatives from Idaho, the five Tribal Nations in the area, and local governments. IMPOC will devise a procedure to send a ranked list of projects to BPA and NWPCC that most closely fit the objectives and strategies in the subbasin plans. This is a great opportunity for WDFW to influence this process to best meet the needs of fish and wildlife in Northeast Washington.

Rocky Reach Hydroelectric Project Relicensing Settlement: The Rocky Reach Settlement Agreement is nearing readiness for signatures. December 7, 2005, was the last settlement negotiation meeting and it is anticipated that the settlement agreement will be circulated for signatures prior to the end of January 2006. The Rocky Reach Settlement Agreement includes agreement on anadromous salmonids, bull trout, resident fish, lamprey, white sturgeon, wildlife, recreation, water quality, cultural resources, and water quality management for the term of the license. The Rocky Reach Anadromous Fish Agreement and the Habitat Conservation Plan serves as the anadromous portion of the settlement agreement.

Ocean Policy Working Group: IRM staff attended the Ocean Policy Working Group meeting on December 7, 2005, to finalize the first report due December 31, 2005. The topics addressed under this report include: 1) Ocean research priorities; 2) Governance; 3) Economic development; 4) Sustainable fisheries; 5) Aquaculture policy; and 6) Coastal energy development. As the lead for sustainable fisheries, the Department supported a recommendation for immediate action to improve the sustainability of fisheries off Washington's outer coast by collecting benthic habitat characterization and mapping data. The second, more in-depth report, due December 31, 2006, will include a description of the status of current Washington coastal fisheries and an evaluation of current fishery management practices. This report will also include alternatives for a process to develop a plan to achieve sustainability over the long-term and determine whether progress toward sustainability is being made. The Ocean Policy Working Group will meet in January to prioritize the topics for the second report and begin organizing an outreach component that will include meetings with coastal communities and stakeholders to solicit input on these topics.

Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project Relicensing Settlement: The Priest Rapids settlement negotiating parties have reached a settlement agreement covering anadromous salmonids. On December 17, 2005, Director Koenings signed the Priest Rapids Salmon and Steelhead Settlement Agreement that represents the culmination of many months of work by state, federal, tribal, and PUD staff. The U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service (USFWS) and NOAA-Fisheries have also signed the agreement. The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission is not likely to sign and the Yakama Nation is as yet undecided. The Priest Rapids anadromous settlement negotiations also led to the USFWS signing the Hanford Reach Fall Chinook Protection Program Agreement on December 16, 2005. More work is yet to be done regarding settlement for other fish species and wildlife.

#### MINIMIZE ADVERSE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN HUMANS AND WILDLIFE.

Avian Influenza (AI) Activities: Staff updated the WDFW fact sheet on the website and responded to several requests for information about AI. Staff cooperated with UC Davis researchers, including our contract veterinarian Dr. Joe Gaydos, to sample scoters for AI viruses during fall capture operations. Our staff veterinarian, Kristin Mansfield has been participating with many other agencies to coordinate AI communications. We are in the process of reviewing a draft waterfowl AI surveillance plan from the Pacific Flyway Council for potential sampling of live and hunter-shot birds in 2006-07, pending receipt of federal funding.

Silt Discharge from Howard Hanson Dam: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is planning to discharge some of the estimated 1.8 million cubic yards of silt that has built up behind Howard Hanson Dam into the Green River this winter, which may present a hazard to incubating salmon eggs and disrupt anglers fishing for winter steelhead. In the coming years, all of the material must eventually be removed to maintain the reservoir's flood control capacity. This winter's discharges are to facilitate the construction of a downstream smolt passage structure to be installed on the dam, and to allow the Corps to fine tune their ability to control the amount of silt being washed downstream during future flushing operations. The Corps will monitor the amount of material being discharged and attempt to keep it below a maximum level as set by the Department of Ecology, but precise control may not be possible. Up to four tests will be conducted by the end of February, each lasting from two to four days. As a result, anglers may find the river to be un-fishable on some days that the flow appears to be within the normal range for this time of year. The WDFW can pass along any information it receives from the Corps regarding the dates set for silt discharges, but notices are likely to be within a very short time in advance of the actual events.

Moses Lake Irrigation and Rehabilitation District: On December 8, 2005, an Area Habitat Biologist and a Fish and Wildlife Officer arranged to meet representatives of the Grant County Planning Department and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) at a location near Wild Goose Estates on Moses Lake. WDFW had received information from two different concerned citizens that the Moses Lake Irrigation and Rehabilitation District (MLIRD) was operating excavation equipment to remove silt from the lakebed. Upon their arrival, they observed a tracked excavator, dump truck and a grader all operating on the lakebed. At this time of the year, the water level of Moses Lake has been lowered, thus exposing this and other areas of the lakebed. The equipment was being used to remove large quantities of accumulated silt from the lakebed. The silt was being hauled to and stockpiled on two parcels of private property adjacent to the work area.

In addition to the equipment operators, a Director of MLIRD and a representative of the construction firm conducting the work were also at the site.

The Irrigation District stated that the silt removal was being carried out to improve access and water flow into the area along Wild Goose Estates. The District Rep also said that it was the belief of the MLIRD that the provisions of RCW 87.84 exempted the District from the permitting processes though the District had obtained permits in the past. The District was aware that there could be consequences to taking that position and that the District would just wait to see how that played out. DFW's Officer asked the contractor if they would voluntarily stop work. The Officer was told that they were under orders to keep working until the project was completed. They also volunteered that they planned to move to another site within the week.

In consultation and cooperation with the Grant County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) presented the information to a Grant County District Court Judge on Monday, January 12, 2005. The judge signed a probable cause order requiring the MLIRD to appear before the court and be arraigned for operating without an HPA permit. Our Officer made arrangements to meet with the District Rep on Tuesday morning and issued a criminal citation charging him with operating within the lakebed of Moses Lake without an HPA permit. The District was also required by the Court to appear in District Court that same afternoon for arraignment.

On January 5, 2006, a multi-agency meeting was held to discuss permitting issues related to the MLIRD incident. Participating in this meeting were representatives of WDFW Habitat and Enforcement programs, the Washington State Office of the Attorney General, City of Moses Lake, Grant County Health District, US Army Corps of Engineers, DNR, Department of Ecology, and the Grant County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. The purpose of the meeting was threefold: 1) Identify permitting issues of each associated entity/agency related to the violation of December 8, 2005; 2) Identify a remediation plan and the respective permits related to the violation of December 8, 2005; and 3) Explore long-term strategies in coordination with the involvement of the Office of Regulatory Assistance that will assist the MLIRD in the permitting processes for the accomplishment of necessary projects by the District.

The parties agreed that the process should continue with regard to the criminal proceedings, if for no other reason than to resolve the question of exemption from permitting processes under RCW 87.84. The respective agencies agreed to consult with MLIRD permits and actions to remediate the effects of the work already accomplished. The agencies would coordinate with the Office of Regulatory Assistance in an attempt to streamline permitting needs for future work the MLIRD may wish to carry out.

#### Region 4 Encountered and Resolved Two Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Cases:

The first involved a Skagit County taxidermist who, as a result of excellent work by local field officers informing and educating over the past couple years, called and reported a customer who had illegally delivered an elk head from Colorado to his shop for taxidermy purposes (caping, skull caping, and mounting). Local officers responded immediately and took appropriate actions at the taxidermy shop to

contain, obtain and dispose of potentially infectious tissue. The officers then contacted the hunter who shot and illegally imported the Colorado elk into Washington. The hunter reported that he butchered (boned) his elk himself and discarded the potentially infectious material (bones) by throwing them out into his yard for his dogs to chew and consume! The hunter lives in Acne, where we currently have a healthy deer and Nooksack elk herd residing. Officer Bauman made a gallant effort to kick and scrape through a blanket snow to obtain as many bones as possible for proper disposal. In an effort to keep the disease from getting a start here in Washington, as the snow recedes, Officer Bauman will return to the violators house and search for any additional/remaining bones. This case will be forwarded to the Skagit County prosecutor for charging decisions.

The second CWD case involved an inadvertent discovery of an illegal importation. As Officer Christensen was performing a routine CWD taxidermy information and education check at a taxidermy shop in North Bend, a customer arrived with three undressed deer heads. According to the violator, he and his uncle went hunting and shot the three deer, one from Montana and two from Wyoming. Officer Christensen also did an outstanding job of containing, obtaining, and disposing of the potentially infectious biological material from the Wyoming deer at the taxidermy shop. In this case, after some coaxing by Officer Christensen, the violators told Officer Christensen that the Wyoming deer carcasses were hanging whole in a meat locker. The following day, Officer Christensen authored a search warrant affidavit and with the help of Officer Brazier, executed a search warrant at the butcher shop where they seized the potentially infectious tissue and disposed of it appropriately minimizing the potential introduction threat to our local deer and elk herds. As in the Skagit County case, Officer Christensen expended the extra effort to allow the violators to retain their trophies and consumable meat, and also as in the Skagit County case, the case report and citations have been filed with the King County Prosecutor's office. This case differs in that as Senator Pam Roach was soliciting campaign contributions from the violators, she became aware of the matter and is very aggressively representing and campaigning on behalf of the violators. She called Captain Hebner, Regional Director Bob Everitt, others (reportedly the Governor) and possibly the Director's office to complain that the Department had not done enough to educate the public regarding CWD and was outraged that we had the audacity to cite the violator or others for illegally importing potentially infectious biological material into the state. An arrest report has been forwarded to Headquarters for review and Captain Hebner is available all day/week to provide more information as required.

## GOAL II: SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE-RELATED OPPORTUNITIES

PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES COMPATIBLE WITH MAINTAINING HEALTHY FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND HABITATS.

Columbia River Commercial Advisory Group: WDFW and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife staff met with the Columbia River Commercial Advisory Group on December 7, 2005, to discuss sturgeon and smelt management for 2006 and touched on spring chinook management and allocation. Most of the members were in attendance.

Watchable Wildlife and Nature Tourism: At the 2005 Governor's Tourism Summit, held in Seattle from November 17 through November 19, 2005, Governor Christine Gregoire announced her support for improved tourism opportunities associated with eco-tourism and nature-based tourism, and specifically mentioned the cooperative watchable wildlife activities of the Departments of Fish and Wildlife and Community, Trade and Economic Development. She also declared June 2006 would be a statewide Great Outdoors Month.

3-Year Hunting Season Setting: The Wildlife Program is continuing to develop recommendations for the 2006-08 hunting season package. In early December, a second Internet-based public opinion survey was completed in which over 3000 responses were collected. This survey asked for opinions on options that could be used to address a variety of topics, ranging from small game seasons and equipment regulations to deer and elk hunting regulations. The results of this survey, as well as other materials associated with the development process, can be found on the hunting page of the WDFW website. During December, the program started to develop alternatives for many subjects that will be made public in January, in preparation for a series of public meetings to be held in mid to late January. Those meetings will be followed by the development of specific recommendations that will be presented to the Fish and Wildlife Commission for adoption in April 2006.

Sunset Falls Fish Transfer: 2005 marked the 48th year of fish trap and haul operations at the Sunset Falls on the SF Skykomish River near the town of Index. The combined fishway and trap and haul facility provides anadromous salmonid access to more than 90 miles of high quality stream habitat in the SF Skykomish watershed. Operations concluded on December 16, 2005, with 41,734 salmonids transported upstream of the falls, in addition to 461 coho and 107 Chinook taken to the Wallace River hatchery to facilitate the Hatchery Genetic Integration Program at that facility. The numbers of fish handled at the Sunset Falls facility in 2005 included a total of 23,331 coho, 614 chinook, 578 steelhead, 17,596 pinks, 62 chum, 18 sockeye, and 103 native char.

Coastal Sport Groundfish Ad Hoc Advisory Meeting: IRM staff sponsored a sport groundfish ad hoc advisory group meeting in Montesano the week of December 5, 2005, to initiate discussions for the 2007-08 Pacific Fishery Management Council biennial management process for groundfish fisheries. Discussion topics included reviewing the results of the recent stock assessment process with a focus on canary rockfish, yelloweye rockfish, and lingcod. Also, the group reviewed the recreational coastal catch statistics for these species by port area, month, and trip type (bottomfish, halibut, and salmon). The meeting attendees also developed a preliminary list of management measure alternatives to meet Washington's recreational harvest targets within the rebuilding requirements for canary and yelloweye rockfish. As the Washington recreational fishery exceeded its yelloweye rockfish harvest target in 2005 (harvesting 5.1 metric tons (mt) of yelloweye compared to a target of 3.5 mt), more restrictive action will likely be needed in 2006 to ensure that the target is met. Another meeting to finalize the options for 2006 and further discuss the 2007-08 alternatives is scheduled for mid-January.

Sardine Advisory Group Meeting: IRM staff held a Sardine Advisory Group meeting in December 2005 to review the results of the 2005 fishery; review the new coastwide harvest guideline and federal

allocation regime for 2006; and discuss proposed changes to the Washington sardine experimental fishery regulations for 2006. After considerable discussion, the group reached consensus on some regulatory changes for 2006 such as the issuance of additional permits. There are 16 permits that qualify for renewal in 2006 and, under current regulations, if there are less than 20 permits issued the Director may offer additional permits up to a maximum of 25. IRM staff will further develop options and analyze the trade-offs for the groups' consideration.

#### WORK WITH TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS TO ENSURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES ARE ACHIEVED

**Radio Tag Study:** In December, in conjunction with the Confederated Colville Tribes, the WDFW Selective Fishing Research Group completed a radio tag study to evaluate chinook migration and movement patterns between Wells and Chief Joseph Dams. The results of this study will be used to evaluate selective fishing gears such as beach seines, tangle nets, fish wheels, and fish traps in the Okanogan River. This large-scale project required cooperation with many groups and people, including Grant County PUD, Douglas County PUD, the Wells Hatchery, Andrew Murdoch, Bob Jateff, and Charlie Snow. Many fishers assisted us by returning radio and jaw tags. We are grateful for everyone's help in making this field season successful. The final report will be available through the Website in 2006.

**Hood Canal Bivalve Management Plan Completed:** The 2006 annual management plan for clams and oysters in Bivalve Region 8 (Hood Canal) was completed and sent to the Department of Natural Resources and tribal co-managers for signature. The Hood Canal Plan is the most complicated of the regional bivalve management plans and includes negotiated resource "trades" of 17,230 pounds of clams, and 10,950 oysters. Only one 2006 annual bivalve management plan in WDFW Region 6 remains to be finalized and signed, Bivalve Region 6 (Central Puget Sound).

**North Sound Chinook Forecast Meeting:** Larrie LaVoy, Angelika Hagen-Breaux, Brett Barkdull and Kirt Hughes met with co-managers and NWIFC staff to discuss alternative methods of forecasting chinook runs. Kit Rawson with Tulalip presented the work he has done in the Snohomish Basin. Hap Leon described the methods he has evaluated for the Hoko River. Larrie addressed potential issues and limitations related to FRAM. Group discussion took place, the general outcome was: that more evaluation needs to take place before diverging from current agreed to practices.

**Klickitat Hatchery:** After many delays, but with much effort by numerous WDFW staff, the lease of Klickitat Hatchery to the Yakama Nation (YN) under the umbrella of the Yakima/Klickitat Fisheries Project (YKFP) is completed. Barring a last minute glitch, the Director approved the various documents executing operational transfer by the end of this month. Rather than full ownership transfer, WDFW and YN have developed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for Joint Operational Control and a lease agreement that transfers day-to-day operational control to YN but retains fee-title ownership to the State of Washington. Recent work included fixing last minute problems with WDFW hatchery staff IPA's and developing an addendum to the MOA that clearly reserved WDFW's unilateral control of public recreational access to the Klickitat River on designated hatchery property. The Klickitat Hatchery portion

of the FY06 Mitchell Act hatchery budget remaining after the effective date of the operational transfer will be controlled by YN and managed directly with NOAA-Fisheries. This lease agreement has been consummated.

**Rendsland Creek Public Tidelands Reopens:** An emergency regulation was submitted to open Rendsland Creek public tidelands to sport clam digging from January 1 through May 31. The Fish & Wildlife Commission approved this opening at their November meeting in Vancouver. Rendsland Creek was closed to clam harvest in 2005 but this summer's clam population survey indicated an increase in abundance. A negotiated trade with the Skokomish Tribe further added to the state's share of clams on this beach.

**Steelhead Management Plans:** Region 4 Fish Management Staff are working with co-managers to develop and finalize annual steelhead management plans. Forecasts for many rivers are below goal causing tense negotiations in some systems while other areas are progressing better. For some of those difficult areas Pat Pattillo, Bob Gibbons, and Bob Leland were consulted and potential resolutions were discussed.

**Coastal Steelhead Agreements:** Steelhead agreements are being negotiated on the Coast with the Quileute, Hoh, and Quinault Tribes.

**Quileute:** The Quillayute agreement is all but in place, requiring only signatures. The Tribe has proposed a fishery similar to last year's, which meets their needs and targets 20.2% of the wild run and 23.6% of the hatchery run. Both are below the Tribe's available shares. Wild escapement is projected to be 8,250, with the wild escapement goal of 5,900. **Quinault:** Technical work is finished for the Queets, Chehalis and Humptulips agreements with a policy meeting scheduled for December 16. Similar to past Queets agreements, QIN is proposing to target 37% of the wild run, with 9% set aside for the sport fishery, and escapement expected to be about 3,350. The escapement goal is still in dispute with the parties agreeing to disagree in recent years and compromising to a point near the middle. The forecast of 6,000 wild steelhead is lower than the runs seen the past couple years due to a poor return of two salt (1½ years in salt water) last year, suggesting a depressed return of three salts this season, and an estimated medium/low smolt out-migration in spring 2004, from which the two salt forecast is derived.

**Hoh Tribal Council:** The Hoh Tribal Council is currently deliberating on a proposed agreement crafted at a policy meeting December 7 for reduced 05/06 tribal and recreational steelhead fisheries. A low forecast of 3,000 wild steelhead with an escapement goal of 2,400 leaves insufficient harvestable fish to schedule normal fisheries. Three years running of escapements below the goal of 2,400 highlights the need to be conservative with this run.

**Coastal Dungeness Crab Court Update:** The Quileute Tribe filed an objection to the Department's regulations under the provisions of Paragraph 4.7 of the Shellfish Implementation Order. The case was assigned to a federal magistrate, Judge Karen Strombom. The Quileute Tribe is seeking relief from the court and requesting that the court delay the opening of the state's fishery until January 15, 2006, the



same date the state opened its fishery in 2005 following a lengthy delay due to poor crab condition. The state's regulation provided for a December 31, 2005, opening including a 64-hour gear-setting period beginning December 28, 2005, at 8:00 a.m. In addition, the state's regulation keeps an area of approximately 140 square miles closed to its fishery until May 1, 2006, to provide an area where the Tribe has exclusive fishing opportunity.

The Quileute Tribe believes that the state's fishery needs to be delayed until January 15 even though, in the 2005 fishery, the Tribe harvested in excess of 57% of the crab in its adjudicated usual and accustomed fishing grounds and stations. The court held a hearing on Friday, December 16 in Tacoma and heard oral arguments from the two parties. The Quileute Tribe had two witnesses including its Natural Resource Director, Mel Moon, and a statistician from British Columbia. The state's sole witness was Phil Anderson. The hearing lasted all day and at its conclusion Judge Strombom requested each side to submit a post-hearing brief to her no later than December 20.

The Judge indicated she would be away for the Christmas holiday and would take the trial materials with her and would be prepared to issue a ruling upon her return on December 29 or 30. The area in question, an area between Destruction Island and Sand Point about 34 miles in length, will remain closed until the Judge issues her ruling, or longer as may be necessary to be consistent with her ruling.

Mass Marking Discussions with the Skokomish Tribe: Discussions with the Skokomish Tribe, aimed at reaching a long-term agreement on mass marking of chinook salmon produced from the George Adams and Hoodspoint hatcheries have reached a conclusion. The commitment made by the parties in May 2005 was completed last week.

2006 State / Tribal Bivalve Management Agreements: Final versions of the 2006 state-tribal clam and oyster management plans in Bivalve Region 1 (Strait of Juan de Fuca) and Bivalve Region 5 (Admiralty Inlet) were completed and forwarded to IRM for signature. The Plans include negotiated clam "trades" whereby the state received 550 pounds of the Tribes' littleneck clam share at Sequim Bay State Park and 750 pounds at Oak Bay County Park in return for equal amounts of the state share at public beaches, which have a surplus. The annual Plans govern all sport and tribal harvests of clams and oysters on public beaches in the regions.

Umatilla Rehabilitation Funds: The Umatilla Tribe donated \$15,000 toward restoration efforts related to the School Fire. The money was used to order shrubs and trees of various sizes, and tree protectors for quaking aspen. The invoices will be sent directly to the Umatilla Tribe. Stock will be planted in intensely burned riparian areas, such as Tualum Creek where salvage logging/ reforestation efforts will not take place. Planting will occur next spring, and Dave Karl has already lined up several volunteer groups interested in participating.

IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF WASHINGTON BY PROVIDING DIVERSE, HIGH QUALITY RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES.

**Puget Sound Chum Management:** The Puget Sound Non-Treaty chum fisheries are nearly complete. Puget Sound commercial salmon fishers have harvested approximately 380,000 chum salmon this fall. Of this total approximately 200,000 were caught in South Puget Sound (Areas 10 & 11) and approximately 120,000 in Hood Canal. Although the runs to both South Puget Sound and Hood Canal were well below expectations, in-season updates allowed for a scaled back harvest and preliminary information shows that spawning escapement objectives have been achieved. The ex-vessel price (amount paid to the fishers) of the commercial chum catch exceeded \$1.5 million. John Long, Don Noviello, Kyle Adicks and Cindy Burns did an excellent job of managing and monitoring these fisheries.

**Outstanding Kokanee Fishery:** The manager at Moran State Park on Orcas Island (<http://www.parks.wa.gov/parkpage.asp?selectedpark=Moran&pageno=1>) recently contacted Mark Downen to inform him that our new kokanee management program produced an outstanding kokanee fishery at Cascade Lake. Cascade Lake lies within Moran State Park on Orcas Island, San Juan County this past summer and fall.

This was excellent news considering the dramatic decline of kokanee in the lake that was noted in 2002. After review of the planting history Mark found that the fish were being planted smaller and smaller and earlier and earlier in every spring due to space limitation at the hatchery and logistics issues associated with the trout planting truck. The fish were poorly timed to take advantage of the spring bloom and had no reserves to survive.

Our solution was to cut the number being planted by two-thirds and plant larger fish (30/lb) during the fall prior of lake turnover and the fall plankton bloom. Advantageous for kokanee the fall plant offers decreasing water temperature, which reduces the activity level of warmwater fish; thus these larger kokanee were able to move quickly into the lakes pelagic zone to take advantage of the fall bloom, and subsequently they were well positioned to exploit the following spring bloom.

After employing this strategy for the past two years, we had many limits this past season and steady effort. We will be surveying the lake this spring to confirm this initial success, and a report on the results will be forthcoming.

#### Crustacean Region 4:

**Sport Crabbing in Puget Sound Closed January 2:** The final Catch Record Card survey to assess the fall/winter catch for this season began the week of January 3, 2006. Results should be forthcoming by the first of February. Results of the survey will have an effect in those management regions where there are state commercial crab fisheries currently underway.

**Scenic Beach Oyster Enhancement:** Oyster enhancement was initiated at Scenic Beach State Park, with 600 bushels of large "cluster" Pacific oysters placed on the beach. Most oyster enhancement is done with juvenile oyster seed, which have been set on individual oyster shells, but this technique is not possible at Scenic Beach State Park where high winds and wave action would wash the individual shells

away. Instead, the Park is being seeded with larger "cluster" oysters containing seed, which act as anchors to hold themselves on the beach. An additional 1,400 bushels of "cluster" oysters will be placed on the beach this year.

Oyster Season at Belfair State Park: Bivalve management staff from the Point Whitney Shellfish Laboratory worked with Department of Health and State Parks to coordinate the opening of a recreational oyster season at Belfair State Park in lower Hood Canal this coming spring. The park has been closed to harvesting for many years due to septic tank pollution, but the water quality has improved in recent years and Health plans to reclassify a large portion of the tidelands this spring. The open area of the park contains over 4.3 million harvestable Pacific oysters and can easily support a year-round season. Assistance will be provided to help park rangers place Carsonite markers along the health-approved boundary and Health has agreed not to publicize their classification until signage and boundary markers are in place at the park. Belfair is expected to become an important sport oyster beach, especially since nearby Twanoh State Park was closed this summer for an indefinite period of time because of public health concerns.

### GOAL III: OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE PROVIDE EXCELLENT PROFESSIONAL SERVICE.

Oiled Bird Rehabilitation Training: Staff worked with representatives of the Washington Oiled Wildlife Alliance (WOWA) on a pilot project to train volunteers in oiled bird rehabilitation techniques. Washington currently relies heavily upon volunteer efforts to help with oiled wildlife issues during significant oil spills. WOWA will organize a series of volunteer training sessions to provide basic training to more than one hundred people. Funding for this effort is being provided by Washington Department of Ecology.

Recent Usage of Bonus Points: Two years ago, Officers had a Reporting Party (R/P) provide information regarding a hunter that he knew who had killed a large buck outside of the open area during a special deer permit hunt. Officers investigated the incident and were able to arrest the hunter for a big game violation. The R/P asked for and received the ten bonus points to be used towards a future hunt. This year, the R/P applied for, and was drawn for a Malaga "Any Elk Permit" thanks to his ten extra points. On Saturday, the day before his season ended, the R/P spotted a 4x5 bull well outside of the permit boundary, and (you've probably guessed the rest) he shot and killed the elk. He was contacted on Sunday and confessed. The elk was seized and charges are pending. Nice work. Oh, the R/P wants the bonus points.

### IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF WDFW'S OPERATIONAL AND SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Enforcement Program Receives Positive Review by CALEA Chief: The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) Recognition on-site assessment of the Enforcement Program concluded on Tuesday, December 6. After spending three days reviewing documentation, talking with staff, and touring various offices, the Assessor, Chief Wayne I. McCoy of Blue Springs, Missouri Police

Department, gave a positive review of the Enforcement Program. He identified two minor deficiencies, but he said this was one of the best assessments he has conducted. He praised Enforcement for our professional and dedicated personnel, improvements in our evidence process, and our cooperation with other agencies. He will recommend for the full CALEA Commission to renew our Recognition award for another three years. This award will be presented in Florida in March 2006.

Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group Program Activities: RFEG Program staff is completing an analysis of RFEG Program and Fish Coop RCWs and WACs to verify operational policies and procedures are correct and to identify any gaps between the codes.

Program staff is also developing RFEG Advisory Board member training for new and continuing board members and preparing for a goal setting meeting. The joint training/meeting is scheduled for Saturday, January 28, 2006, in Olympia. The Director and Deputy Director are scheduled to attend briefly in the morning.

Dungeness Crab Catch Record Card System: Fish Program and IRM staff met with Frank Hawley in the Licensing Division to discuss changes to the Dungeness crab catch record card system used to estimate recreational crab catch. Three items were identified and agreed to as having the potential to improve the public participation in the CRC survey: 1) Implement a positive incentive program to encourage anglers to have their CRC available when called on the phone survey rather than recalling their data from memory; 2) Develop an Internet reporting system; and 3) Allow anglers to report their catch through an agency call center. All three options will be explored further.

#### RECRUIT, DEVELOP AND RETAIN A DIVERSE WORKFORCE WITH HIGH PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS.

HPA Training: Staff coordinated the last HPA Basics Training for 2005 with regional staff, our AAGs, and Enforcement. Staff also established and announced the HPA Basics Training schedule for 2006. Class dates are tied with the agency's New Employee Orientation schedule held each quarter. HPA Basics Training in 2006 is scheduled for February 1, April 26, July 12 and October 11.

New Officers Begin Training: Two new Fish and Wildlife Officers will begin training in the Olympia headquarters in early January 2006. From there they will attend the Criminal Justice Training Center in Burien for extensive training prior to being released to enforce the rules and regulations set forth by our state Legislature.

#### RECONNECT WITH THOSE INTERESTED IN WASHINGTON'S FISH AND WILDLIFE

Crab Advisory Board Meeting: Puget Sound shellfish management staff enjoyed the company of recreational and commercial crab advisors at the Mill Creek Regional Office on January 5, 2006. The Advisory board meeting was called to discuss ideas that would enhance and improve the Dungeness Crab Catch Record Survey methodology.

Salmon in the Classroom: Salmon in the Classroom, an educational program begun in the 1980's, continues to increase in size and popularity each year. This year, James Chandler has added 15 new schools to the program while continuing to support the more than 700 schools statewide with on-going projects. This is no small accomplishment when you consider the transience of many teaching positions and the need to train and educate many new teachers each year.

"The Highest Tide": The Highest Tide a recent novel by local author Jim Lynch, received a very complimentary review in the New York Times Holiday Book Review. The author shadowed Alan Rammer for a year while researching the book. Lynch has stated in recent interviews that one of the book's central characters is based on Alan Rammer's career. Alan currently works in the Fish Program's Administrative Services Division in Outreach and Education.

Camp Fire USA Lower Columbia Council: Camp Fire USA Lower Columbia Council, in partnership with WDFW and the Outdoor Recreation Partnerships Initiative, has submitted a grant application this week to the Weatherby Foundation for \$10,000 in seed money for planning and presenting a SW Washington Regional Youth Outdoor Exposition. A decision is expected by late January.

Jefferson County Conservation District Annual Meeting Presentation: Thom Johnson gave a presentation at the annual meeting of the Jefferson County Conservation District (JCCD) on the salmon recovery efforts in east Jefferson County. The JCCD staff and other local groups are important partners in the summer chum salmon recovery programs on Salmon and Chimacum creeks and in the coho salmon recovery efforts on Snow Creek. It is always good to be able to report that the fish are coming back and that the programs are a success story in the making.

Snow / Salmon Technical Advisory Group and Chumsortium: Thom Johnson attended a meeting of the Snow/Salmon Technical Advisory Group and the Chumsortium to discuss ongoing efforts to recover habitats in the Snow and Salmon creek watersheds flowing into Discovery Bay. This group was also instrumental in helping WDFW prepare a draft management plan for the Snow/Salmon Wildlife Management Area, a portion of the North Olympic Wildlife Management Area.

Citizen Science: Nicole Ricketts, Chuck Gibilisco, Lauren Seyda, and Ken Bevis continued outreach in the Yakima Valley and the Sunnyside School District for two weeks in November. The team worked with the Yakima Basin Environmental Education Program to get 5th graders to the Sunnyside Wildlife Area. It was a successful day of research and data gathering in the field. The students cleaned out nest boxes that were built and placed by last year's 5th graders. This year's students confirmed use of the nest boxes by swallows and wrens. Data was collected for both the purposes of the refuge managers and the University of Washington NatureMapping databank.

Nicole and Lauren followed up the field day at a teacher workshop hosted by the Yakima Basin Environmental Education Program (YBEEP). Nicole introduced the new Project WILD Flying WILD curriculum guide and presented activities around bird ecology and habitat conservation. Fifty teachers representing the entire valley attended and each received a guide. Bob Tuck, the director of the YBEEP

program, received 2 Flying WILD kits to support teachers in the valley. Nicole developed the kits for the program through a grant she received from the National Project WILD program. She will be working with interested teachers in the spring to put together bird festivals in their school.

Marine Resources for Future Generations Program: Marine Resources for Future Generations (MRFFG) Program began in 1997 in Pierce County, and primarily includes two groups of social service organizations - 1) The Korean Women's Association (KWA), which serves the Korean, Samoan, and Filipino communities; and 2) The Indochinese Cultural and Service Center (ICSC), which serves the Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian communications. Alan Rammer, Marine Education Program Manager, has been key to growth of this program since its inception and remains liaison for the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities. The article speaks to collaboration between university researchers and community, tribal, and agency partners in framing aspects of the analytic-deliberative risk-management process to proactively address environmental health concerns. The journal can be accessed at: [www.ehponline.org](http://www.ehponline.org).

Lake Morton Adopt and Access: The Covington Water District employees have officially adopted the Lake Morton Public Fishing Access site in King County. This is the 18th site to be adopted in the statewide Adopt an Access Program; only 490 left to go.

Partnerships and Volunteer Services: The Department of Fish and Wildlife, through the Partnerships and Volunteer Services Program, recognized the continued efforts of the Allyn Salmon Enhancement Group (ASEG). The Allyn Salmon Enhancement Group often works in conjunction with the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement and the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Groups as well conducting their own projects. The group provides an average of 1,500 hours per year toward salmon enhancement.

2006 Sportsmen Show Season Has Begun: The calendar of events includes the following: Seattle Boat Show, January 6 through 14; Tri-Cities Sportsmen Show, January 20 - 22; Portland Sportsmen Show February 8 - 12; Yakima Sportsmen Show, February 17 - 19; Monroe Sportsmen Show, February 22 - 26; the Big Horn Show, March 16 - 19.

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Volunteer Cooperative Grant Program Second Round Grant Proposals: (WDFW) began accepting applications on January 2 from individuals and groups seeking financial support for volunteer projects that benefit fish and wildlife. Applications will be accepted until March 31. They can be found at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/volunter/vol-7.htm>.

We expect to award about \$120,000 in grants from the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) for projects undertaken between July 1, 2006, and June 30, 2007.

Game Management Advisory Council (GMAC): The final 2005 Game Management Advisory Council meeting was held in Ellensburg as part of the public process for setting the 2006-08 hunting seasons. The meeting focused on reviewing the list of management options that had been developed over the past several months, as well as reviewing and developing alternatives that will be brought to the public

during January's public meetings. The public meeting process will culminate in development of season recommendations that will be taken to the Fish and Wildlife Commission in April 2006.

#### PROVIDE SOUND OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF WDFW LANDS, FACILITIES AND ACCESS SITES.

Columbia Springs Environmental Education Center: Region and Headquarters staff have been working with the partners at the Columbia Springs Environmental Center located at Vancouver Trout Hatchery to develop a Land Lease agreement. This agreement, when completed and approved by the commission, will enable the Columbia Springs Foundation to move forward with the next phase in the planning and development of the new Environmental Education and Research Facility located on site. The legislature appropriated \$700,000 this biennium to allow for this phase to be completed with the ultimate goal of creating an Education Center for Clark County public and private schools.

School Fire Elk Fence Reconstruction: Work on the fence as ceased for the winter. The monthly expenses for the entire crew are about \$200,000. The School fire fence has a \$1.7 million recommendation in the Governor's Supplemental Budget.

#### Engineering's Completed Projects from 2005:

##### **Project: Lake Kapowsin Access Development**

Bid Opening: August 16, 2005

Estimated Project Cost: \$405,000.00

The project is located on the north shore of Lake Kapowsin at 29405 Orville Road East, Pierce County, Washington. The scope of this project involved construction of a new boating access area on Lake Kapowsin to replace the existing primitive access that has been closed. The project included construction of a new road approach and road system leading to two parking areas suitable for single vehicles and car-trailer combinations. The shore amenities constructed included boarding float, piling, gangway, and concrete ADA path. Project: Bush Point Access ~ Phase One Boat Launch Ramp Facility

Bid Opening: September 15, 2005

Estimated Project Cost: \$255,000.00 - \$300,000.00

The scope of work included removal of an existing temporary launch ramp, construction of a boat launch facility including a reinforced concrete transition ramp, installation of an articulated concrete mat ramp, concrete float abutment, seawall repair, piling and boarding floats along with associated site improvements at the Dept's Bush Point Facility, Island County, Washington.

##### **Project: Bush Point Access ~ Phase Two Site Development**

Bid Opening: December 15, 2005

Estimated Project Cost: \$175,000.00 - \$220,000.00

The scope of work included construction of a fully functioning flush public restroom facility including all mechanical, electrical, and plumbing. The restroom facility includes carpentry, masonry, painting, furnishings, and drainage. The project also included construction of a septic system including holding tanks, a pumping system, drain field, piping, connections, and monitoring system for the flush restroom.

This project also included grading and paving a parking lot and turnaround area including striping, signage, creation of storm water drains, and infiltration ponds. Also included are construction and installation of a cedar fence with gate, planting of trees, shrubs, lawn and all associated site improvements at the Department's Bush Point Facility, Whidbey Island, Island County, Washington.

**Project: Region 3 Yakima Evidence Storage and Yard**

Bid Opening: December 14, 2005

Estimated Project Cost: \$125,000.00

Constructed a 16' x 30' addition to an existing pole building at the Department's Region 3 Headquarters in Yakima. Work included earthwork, fencing, concrete work, framing, interior finishes, electrical work, and alarms.